(b) if so, the detail thereof; and

(c) by when a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI HARIN PATHAK): (a) The Government does not propose to hand over the production of advanced ordnance system to private sector.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Fire incidents in Ordnance Depots

†339. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the recent incidents of fire in ordnance depots in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether involvement of external forces has been detected in these incidents;

(d) if so, what remedial measures have been taken by Government to prevent recurrence of such incidents in future; and

(e) whether Government have taken any specific measures to ensure adequate safety of all the ordnance depots in the country?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) A fire incidents occurred at ammunition depot Bharatpur, on 28 April, 2000 in which approximately 12000 tonnes of ammunition was destroyed. The Court of Inquiry has assessed the damage of approximately Rs. 393 crores. Another fire incident took place at Central Ordnance Depot, Kanpur on 28th May, 2000, in which stores related to high altitude clothing and equipment worth approximately Rs. 4 crores were destroyed.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) After the fire accident in Bharatpur, the Raksha Mantri took a series of meetings of officers of Ministry of Defence and Army Headquarters where, *inter alia*, it was decided that the Army would prepare an Action Plan to bring all ammunition under proper and standard cover within two years and senior officers would be sent to all Ammunition Depots to inspect the safety and security arrangements of the Depots, so that recurrence of such incidents in the future is avoided.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.